

ECONOMIC HISTORY OF MIZORAM: SOME EXPLORATIONS

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Abstract

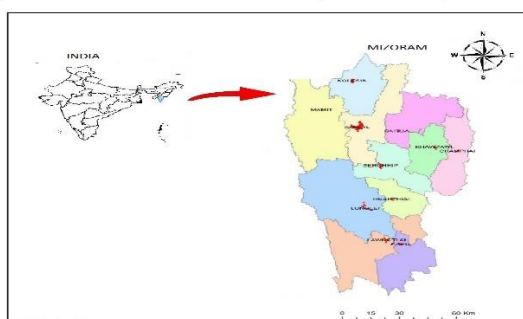
Perched on the hills of North Eastern corner of India, Mizoram is flanked by Bangladesh on the west and Burma on the east and south. In Mizo society, the basic resources for economic activities, i.e., the land was distributed by the local chief and mutually owned by the community. Since pre-historic times the entire population was engaged in agriculture and derived their livelihood by cultivating paddy. The system of business transaction before the pre-colonial period was in the form of Barter system and Sial (Mithun) played a significant role in trading as well as for festival purposes. From 1891, Mizoram was under the political and administrative control of the British Government, which was followed by the entry of the Christian Missionaries in 1894. The British introduced annual house tax. The collection of house tax in kind was terminated from 1904 and they insisted the payment in cash. As a consequence, the society started to acknowledge the value and utility of Money. Economic activities in Mizoram spurred with the coming of the British and the tribal economy experienced a huge expansion in trade and in all developmental exercises. This paper is an attempt to analyse the economic history of Mizoram from the pre-colonial and colonial perspective. This study employs historical research methods, and it is descriptive in nature and the data were gathered from the secondary sources.

Keywords: Mizo - Colonial – Agriculture -Tax - Economic Development -Trade.

INTRODUCTION

Mizoram state is a northeast corner of India is bestowed with vibrant and exquisite flora and fauna. It lies between 92.16° to 93.26° east longitude and 21.56° to 24.31° north latitude. The area covers 21,087 sq.km and 630 km. long international boundary. From north to south the state stretch 277 km and from east to west, it extends 121 km. Mizoram is bordered by the states of Assam and Manipur on the north and Chin Hills of Burma and Manipur state on the east. On the south it is bounded by Arakan Hill Tracts of Burma and Bangladesh and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh and Tripura state on the west.

Figure 1: Map of Mizoram



Source: Redrawn from MIRSAC Map

Mizoram or the land of the Mizos was earlier known as Lushai Hills. 'Mizo' is a generic term combination of 'Mi' and 'Zo', literally interpreted as 'hillmen'. The highlanders or people residing on high hill are designated as 'Mizo'. Their history can be traced back to the history of the South-East Asian people and it is generally believed that Mizo came out of a very big stone cave called Sinlung, which means closed stone. Some people claimed that "Chhinlung" is the way their fore fathers commemorate the Great Wall of China from where they had originated a long time ago.

While others argued that "Chhinlung" was not a rock but the way their forefathers remember CHIEN-LUNG, one of their last Kings of the Manchu dynasty which ruled over China in the 17th and 18th centuries AD (Lalchungnunga (1987: 43-45) For the protection of the village as well as to bear the burden of domestic and political issues, the Mizo people felt the necessity to have their own chief.

To accomplish protecting the individual rights, conducting the village matters, keep up the common harmony, building the diplomatic relations, and so on the chief is supported by Upa or elders, upon whom the chief hand over certain powers for the fair and appropriate administration (Lalmachhuana 2019:56).

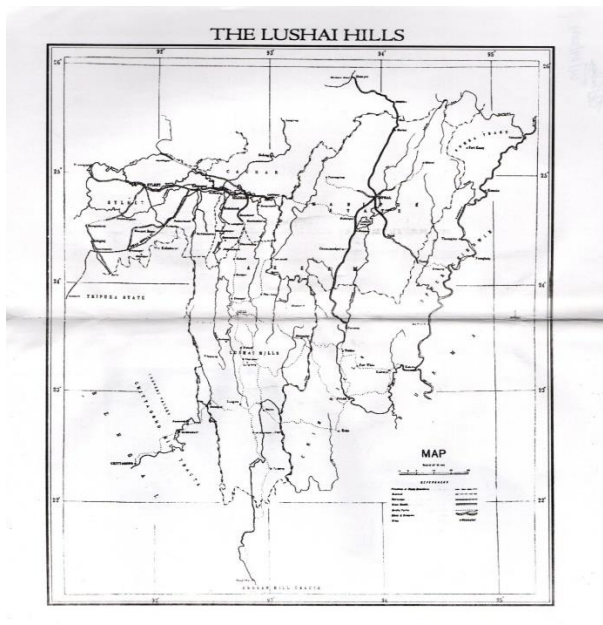
At first, chieftainship was a part of development but eventually it became hereditary. At the former phase, Zahmuaka was invited and wanted to be the chief by the villagers of Khawrua and Tlangkhua, when majority of the Lusei were at Seipuiakhur in Burma. Zahmuaka, later turns out to be the first chief among the Mizo.

His sons were Zadenga, Paliana, Thangluaha, Thangura, Rivunga and Rokhuma. Thangura had a grandson named Sailova, whose descendants governed the Lusei and other Mizo clans who inhabited the present Mizoram. The Sailo chiefs later controlled the chieftainship as they were blessed with capabilities and supremacy in managing the day-today activity of the villages (Lalmachhuana 2019:57).

The political association of the British with the Mizos began following their subjugation of Bengal subsequent to the Battle of Plassey. The British province stirred the Mizo Hills on Cachar and Chittagong borderline (Mackenzie 1979: 290). In 1891, District administration in Mizoram began and the region was divided into the South Lushai Hills District and the North Lushai Hills District. Later, the South Lushai Hills District and North Lushai Hills District were united into one unit known as the Lushai Hills District under the Chief Commissioner of Assam in 1898.

In 1971, the Government of India enacted the Northeastern (Areas) Reorganization Act by amending the Indian Constitution (Twenty-Seventh Amendment). Accordingly, Mizo Hills District became a Union Territory and on 20th February 1987, Mizoram was lifted up from the position of a Union Territory to the State of Mizoram (Lalmachhuana 2019:113-114).

Figure 2: The Lushai Hills



Source: A.G. Mccall. *The Lushai Chrysalis*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, Deptt. Of Art & Culture, Govt. Of Mizoram, 1977.

THE PRE-COLONIAL ECONOMY

The Mizo society during the pre-colonial period was remarkable as all the lands were owned by the Chief and it was hereditary in nature. It became a custom for the Chief to distribute his land and provide to each of his sons a village for them after they got married (Parry 1976: 3-4). However, under the discretion of the Chief, the people in the village were allowed to cultivate and accumulate their necessities and requirements. According to Lianzela, the fundamental source for economic activities was possessed collectively by the people and the Chief allocate the land for his subjects (Lianzela 1994:12).

At the beginning of the year, a portion of land was allocated to each of his subjects for cultivation by the Chief in lieu of a set tribute termed as Fathang¹. This means that the Chief was given a portion of the crops produced. No permanent patta holding of the cultivated land was existed. The Mizo people exercise jhumming method and the whole village sometimes migrated to different places in search of an arable land. In Mizo society, the practice of agriculture and settlement method was associated to absence of individual rights in land holdings (Sailo 2004:54-55).

It may be said that a crude form of Zamindari² system existed even before the coming of the British. The Chief collected the tribute in lieu of cultivating the land from the people of his village. The Chief was regarded as the father of his people and lends a helping hand to those who faced hardships and difficulties and his people also help him in return (Parry 1988:1). He

acts as a guardian and protector of his subjects. According to McCall, Chieftainships among the Lusheis was regarded as the sole privilege of the Sailo and no identifiable system was adopted by which a Commoner could possess the status of Chieftainship through hard work (McCall 1977:96-98).

The Chief has an absolute authority and within the area of his authority, his power was immeasurable. To uphold his Chieftainship, he cannot become an autocrat as he could be deserted by his subjects and search shelter and asylum from another Chief. This could cause the collapse of his power for his greatness massively depended on the size and number of village under his power and authority.

The backbone of the traditional Mizo economy was the practice of shifting cultivation called as Jhumming and consist of various stages. The principal need of all the villagers in the area was to derive from their lands adequate rice or maize for their subsistence. McCall mentioned that bamboos and trees in the forest were cut down and burned and followed by the sowing of seeds, weeding and final harvesting. The day of burning forest was selected by the end of March or in April, and it requires a significant skill to fire the cleared hillside. The fire-lines were guarded by the male villagers to prevent the unnecessary damage and protect the uncleared side from fire

After choosing a period of sowing seeds, the male and female in the village turned out by dibbling empty holes with spears or daos and drop down the rice seeds. The holes are dig out with a hoe every eighteen inches or so and seven or more grains of rice were dibbled (McCall 1977:167-168). The real agricultural task began between June and October. The rice planting fields were weeded rigorously three or four times in order to take care the growing shoots from the spiteful weeds. It was organized in a manner of agricultural work partnership and comprised mainly unmarried young men and women (Sailo 2004:67).

In the early days, the main staple foods of the Mizos are Maize, arum-bulb. Sweet potatoes, millet, gums etc. Later, the main crops cultivated by the Mizos are Rice and Maize. Rice was the basic food among the people. The primitive Mizo people also engaged in rearing of domestic animals such as pig, mithun, chicken etc. Among the indigenous domestic animals, mithun played an important role in early economic life of the Mizos. It was regarded as a significant source of food, but can also be used as a marriage price of a girl. It was considered as an important form of rituals and used for exchanging commodities and captives too (Mate 2014:23).

Before the British landed in the Lushai hills, the most commonly used for tools and implements was Iron. From the account of Shakespear, it was evident that the major source of iron supply hailed from the frontier bazaars in Cachar, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Burma and which was frequent by the Mizo people. Weapons and tools was made out of crude iron, processed and shaped by the blacksmith in the village. The popular agricultural tools used by them are dao, axe, and a hoe. The axe heads were made of iron while the handles were made of bamboo (Shakespear 1987:16-17). The agricultural tools were repaired by the village blacksmith without rendering any unfair favour to any single house and thus in return he was rewarded

with a certain amount of paddy from every house in the village. Sometimes, gunlocks, fishhooks, spearheads etc were also repaired by him and the art of iron wrought and forging was taught by the Bengali captives (Lewin 1977:12)

Figure 3: Weapons and Tools used by Mizo



Source: Lianhmingthanga. Material Culture of the Mizo (Mizoram: Firma Klm Private Ltd, 1998), 47-49.

The Mizo made different baskets with different sizes and shape for carrying goods. They mainly used bamboos and canes for making those baskets and especially men keep up the work. Different baskets such as Thul, Dawrawn, Bawmrang, Em, Thlangra, Fawng, Paikawng were manufactured to serve different purposes. A basket having short four legs almost one foot square at the bottom and expanding upward till the mouth in a circle with measuring thirty inches diameter is called Thul which was used chiefly for preserving assets. Thlangra is made for holding grains and clearing the pounded rice from the chaff (Shakespeare 1987:21).

Figure 4: Baskets made by Mizo



Source: Lianhmingthanga. Material Culture of the Mizo (Mizoram: Firma Klm Private Ltd, 1998), 13.

The Mizo people produced their own cloths and the equipment for spinning, weaving and cleaning the cotton was very much alike to the one used in Bengal (Sailo 2004:73). It was asserted by McCall that the designs made by the South Lushai Hills were more beautiful and flawlessly finished than in the North Lushai Hills (McCall 1977:183). By boiling the leaves of Assam Indigo, the Mizo women executed the art of dyeing. This dyeing work produced the dark blue colour (Shakespeare 1987:31).

Even before the colonial period, the Mizos familiar to the art of lacquering, powder horns, wood combs, scabbards and other material in a successful way. McCall holds that they procured red powder from Burma. This red powder was mixed with black colour to acquire the best shade (McCall 1977:183-184).

The art of pottery and brass work among the Mizo society was apparent from the information that all their foodstuffs were fire roasted or cooked. Usually women in the village engaged in the art of pottery. A circle pot with a mouth of about 6-8 inches width was used for cooking and a big container about 2 inches high and 15 inches in diameter; taper to 9 inches at the mouth was employed for brewing beer. The metals used for making brass and copper moulding were imported from outside and from captives or from the plains of Burma, they had learnt the art of moulding also (Sailo 2004:74-75).

In 1850s, firearms were acquired by the Mizo people and their potentiality in hunting and fighting skills were extremely improved. Woodthorpe claimed that an English produced Flintlock Gun was found during 1871-72 amongst the Mizo. They started producing their own gunpowder by importing the crucial ingredient i.e Sulphur from Burma after the British banned the sale of gunpowder to the Mizos from Cachar and Chittagong (Woodthorpe 1978: 73). They also obtained guns from their raiding activities on the Cacharplains. They needed arms for raiding as well as to defend themselves from their enemies (Mate 2014: 28).

It is apparent that the technology level in the pre-British period was weak and low. The main reason lies in the minimum trade connection and association with the bordering regions. Their main connection to the neighboring areas was in the form of wars and invasions. To suffice the local needs, the needed technology was basic and this hampers the development process. Since the Mizo people moved from one place to another, they chose to hold minimum possessions with no obstruction to the new areas.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The exhaustion of the arable land urged the Mizo sub-tribes and clans to change their settlements every 7 or 8 years near the villages. Due to the fast population growth and partly on the grounds of pressures from the South tribes during 1870s, inter-village conflict and persistent warfare existed in Mizoram (Browne 1979:55-73). Before the coming of the British, there was no definite set of boundary between the different rival chiefs and this caused horrible estrangement and conflict.

It was evident that the War between the descendants of Lallula from the North and Cherri's clan from the South occurred in 1856 over Piler hills, which lasted for three years. Different branches of ruling Sailo chiefs and families, engaged at war over a certain territory for cultivable land.

From 1840s onwards, the hill tribes occupied near the hills of the Surma valley, Cachar plains and Chittagong plains often caused damage and intense fear into the plains people of Cachar, Sylhet and Chittagong. The Lushais visited these plains of Chittagong and Cachar and seized any vulnerable habitation on their way, ransacked and plundered and snatch loot in heads, slaves and valuable articles.

The British government conducted retaliatory expeditionary forces into the Hills but could not success to punish the offenders. In 1844, the first expedition was sent out under Captain Blackwood to punish the inhabitants of Lushai Hills under a Chief named Lalsuthlaha and his

brother Botai. The second expedition was operated under Lt.Colonel Lister in 1850 against the hills people who attacked the Sylhet border and the southern edge of Cachar.

It was realized by the British that those ordinary expeditionary forces proved futile in so far as the punishment of the tribals in the Lushai Hills were concerned. The Lushai Chiefs repeatedly attacked and plundered the British territory even though the later followed reconciliation policy. Recognizing the unsuccessful policy of conciliation, the British authority commissioned another powerful expedition in 1869 against the Lushai people (Mackenzie 1979:290-300).

This expedition again concluded in failure and thus the British government sent another expedition and their main purpose was to establish a strong and powerful Policy of Conciliation in 1871-1872 with no intention of taking revenge and punitive measures against the Mizos. The Lushais showed calm and attacked and warfare was unheard during the first three years of expeditions.

In order to ensure harmony and peace among the Lushais with the British government, they initiated markets or Bazars in the Hills before and after the 1871-1872 expedition. This enabled them to gather information about their action, and operation of their internal politics. Three Bazars were set up by the British in the Lushai Hills, the Changsil Bazar, the Sonai Bazar and the Tipaimukh Bazar (Mackenzie 1979:314-317).

The Lushai Chiefs continued to raid the areas of Cachar and Chittaging tracts and some even attacked the Bazars, which were opened by the British as a conciliation policy. In response to this, the British executed another expedition in 1889-1890 known as the Chin Lushai Expedition. These expeditions aimed not only retaliating the guilty chiefs and depart but to take over and annex the region into the British Empire. Thus, on 1st April 1898, the Lushai Hills was annexed to the British Indian Empire by amalgamating the North and South Lushai Hills (Mc Call 1977:52-54).

This annexation overturned the Mizo society in their socio-economic as well as political stability. The primary effect of the formation of the British power in the Lushai Hills was felt massively by the Lushai Chiefs. Their supremacy and powers were greatly reduced and diminished (Sailo 2004: 92-93).

Trade was conducted in the early 1890s at Changsil, the sole bazar except at Aizawl in the North Lushai Hills. It was known that two shops were operated at Aizawl and five at Changsil, but the owners were non-Mizo traders. The two shops at Aizawl were not functioned well compared with the five shops at Changsil. (Sailo 2004:98). Capt. T.H. Lewin initiated trade marts different places in Mizoram and the popular bazaars in the north were 1) Tipaimukh bazaar 2) Sonai bazaar and 3) Changsil formerly known as Bepari bazaar. In the northern part, trademarts were established at Demagiri or Tlabung in 1873 at the recommendation of Capt. T.H. Lewin. The British attempted to maintain peace and harmony in the region set up these bazaars also as a means to gather information on the chiefs, their actions and tendencies.

The first work exerted by the British to control and administer the Lushai Hills was the issuance of an order restraining some faulty chiefs encroaching other lands and territory of the vulnerable and feeble chiefs. An infringement of which would be met with strict punishment and that could be resulted in the loss of their positions.

On 1st April 1898, Shakespear created the Land Settlement by which every Chief was allowed a certain region of the Lushai Hills which enabled him and his people to shift freely. The British fixed the maximum rate of Fathang that the Chiefs could levy at six snowflake kerosene oil tins of unsift rice from his villagers. For households having sufficient food must give Fathang at the rate of Rs. 2/- as per the demand by chief (Mc Call 1980: 29-30).

Under the supervision of Shakespear, wet rice cultivation was started at Champhai and Thenzawl in 1898 and extended to other regions. By 1912, around 400 household with a population of about 2,000 persons practised wet rice cultivation at Champhai, North Vanlaiphai and at Thenzawl. The Government initiated demonstration farms at Aizawl and Lunglei for experimentation of agricultural and horticultural crops. In Mizoram, A Khasi immigrant called Raja Singh build the first privately owned fruit-garden. Silk rearing was started by The Salvation Army in the 1920s (Sailo 2004:93-97). The British began to collect revenue in the form of house tax in 1891. It can be paid both in cash and in kind for those who were unable to pay in cash. During Shakespear administration in South Lushai Hills claimed that a demand of 20 seers of cleaned rice must be made from each house to the British Government.

But these impositions were strongly opposed by the Lushais. During that period, the North Lushai Hills practised Re.1 per house with the right to buy rice at the rate of Rs.2 per mound. House tax was elevated from Re.1 to Rs.2 from 1898 (Sailo 2004:98-99).

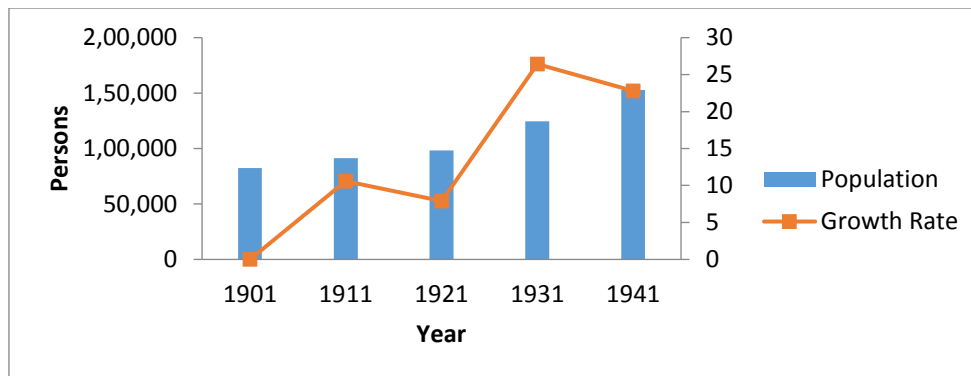
The population of the Mizo people started increasing and in 40 years' time, it had increased by 85 per cent. The table below shows that the decadal growth rate declined from 10.6 per cent in 1911 to 7.90 percent in 1921 rises from 7.90 per cent in 1921 to 26.42 percent in 1931 and again declined from 26.42 per cent in 1931 to 22.81 percent in 1941. It is evident that there is a fluctuation in the decadal growth rate of population of Mizoram during 40 years.

Table 1: Growth of Population in Mizoram (1901-1941)

| Year | Population (persons) | Growth Rate (percentage) |
|------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1901 | 82,434 | - |
| 1911 | 91,204 | 10.6 |
| 1921 | 98,406 | 7.90 |
| 1931 | 124,404 | 26.42 |
| 1941 | 152,786 | 22.81 |

Source: Calculated From Statistical Abstract Mizoram 2020.

Figure 5: Growth of Population in Mizoram (1901-1941)



Source: Table 1

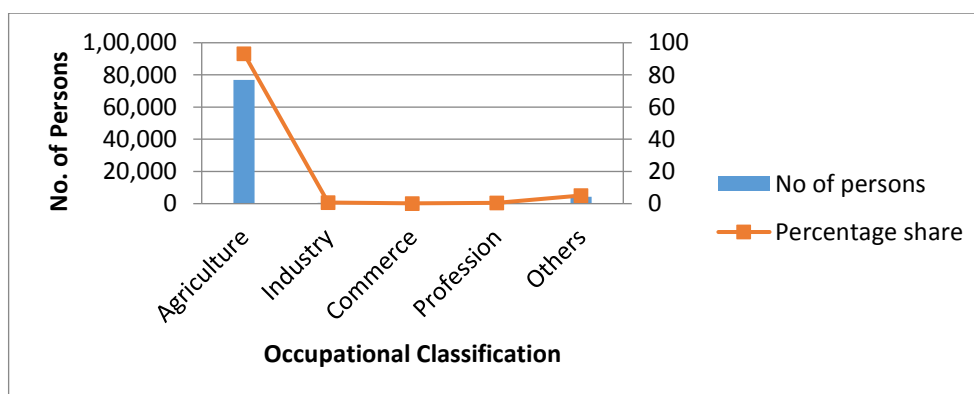
From the account of the census of India (Assam) 1901, the occupational distribution of Mizoram shows that a vast populace of Mizoram engaged in Agriculture and its percentage share was 93.3 per cent. Other occupational activities such as Industry, Commerce, Profession and other occupations were negligible.

Table 2: Occupational Distribution of Mizoram in 1901

| Occupational Classification | No of persons | Percentage share |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Agriculture | 76,971 | 93.3 |
| Industry | 603 | 0.7 |
| Commerce | 167 | 0.2 |
| Profession | 455 | 0.5 |
| Others | 4238 | 5.1 |
| Total Population | 82,434 | 100 |

Source: Calculated From B. C. Allen, Census Of India 1901: Vol IV Assam (Shillong: The Assam Secretariat Printing Office, 1902), 172-174.

Figure 6: Occupational Distribution of Mizoram in 1901



Source: Table 2

IMPORTS IN MIZORAM

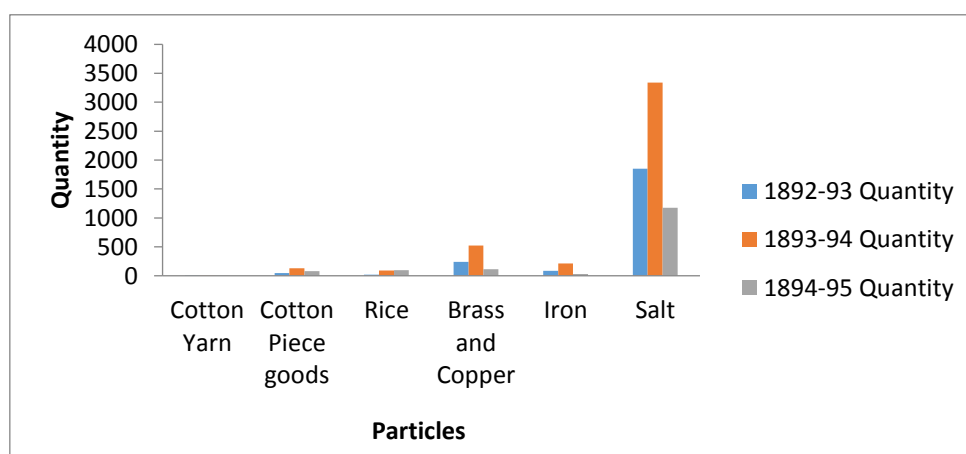
During the colonial period, Mizoram was opened to free trade and there was a huge change in the import as well as export basket. Salt occupied a very important place in the life of a Mizo society. The conflict between the local chiefs or inter-tribal feuds over the ownership of salt springs ended after the annexation of Cachar in 1832. The Bengali traders agreed to bring the salt at the foothills of the Mizos. They also used to procure it from Cachar, Sylhet and Chittagong plains bazar during their occasional visit. From there, Iron was also obtained. The Mizo people have two types of cotton- light brown and pure white and grow mostly for their domestic needs (Mate 2014: 27-28). It is clear from the table that during the three years (1892-1895), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, rice, brass and copper, Iron and Salt were imported and among these, the quantity imported of Salt was highest among the commodities imported during 1892-95. The quantities imported of Brass and Copper also higher compared to other goods.

Table 3: Imports Quantity in Mizoram during 1892-1895

| Particles | 1892-93 | 1893-94 | 1894-95 |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Quantity | Quantity | Quantity |
| | Mds | Mds | Mds |
| Cotton Yarn | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| Cotton Piece goods | 48 | 128 | 78 |
| Rice | 20 | 91 | 98 |
| Brass and Copper | 243 | 522 | 111 |
| Iron | 84 | 215 | 32 |
| Salt | 1852 | 3338 | 1176 |

Source: B. Lalthangliana, History and Culture of Mizo in India, Burma & Bangladesh (Mizoram: The Rtm Press, 2001), 529.

Figure 7: Imports in Mizoram during 1892-1895



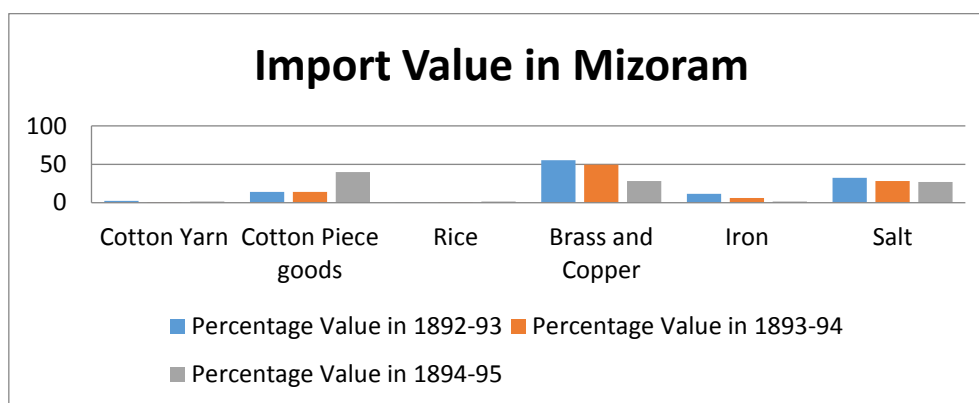
Source: Table 3

Table 4: Imports Value in Mizoram during 1892-1895

| Particles | Percentage Value in 1892-93 | Percentage Value in 1893-94 | Percentage Value in 1894-95 |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cotton Yarn | 2.18 | 0.65 | 1.64 |
| Cotton Piece goods | 13.87 | 14.19 | 39.78 |
| Rice | 0.37 | 0.91 | 1.71 |
| Brass and Copper | 55.50 | 49.49 | 28.37 |
| Iron | 11.56 | 6.24 | 1.51 |
| Salt | 32.55 | 28.31 | 26.95 |

Source: Calculated From B. Lalthangliana, History And Culture Of Mizo In India, Burma & Bangladesh (Mizoram: The Rtm Press, 2001), 529.

Figure 8: Import Value in Mizoram during 1892-1895



Source: Table 4

It appears from the table that the import value of Brass and Copper had highest percentage value among the imported goods in the year 1892-93 and 1893-94 but decline in the year 1894-95. The imported value of cotton piece goods rise sharply in the year 1894-95 compared to the previous years and its percentage value had the highest share among the imported value of commodities i.e., 39.78%. Salt remained consistent rise throughout the years.

EXPORTS FROM MIZORAM

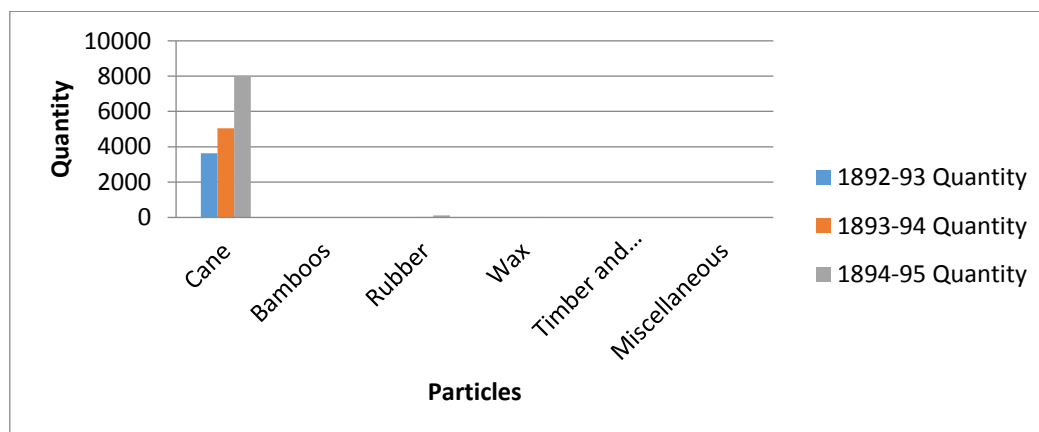
At the beginning, the Mizo were ignorant of the market value of rubber. They used it as a commodity in exchange for other items, and did not trade it for money. When the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar visited Changsil bazar in May 1874, he mentioned that at Rs.27 per mound, rubber was bought by the trader and resold it at Rs. 50 or Rs.60 in Silchar. In course of time, the commercial value of rubber was realised. They involved in rubber trade at trade marts established at Tipaimukh, Sonai, Changsil to barter with other goods or to sell with cash payment(Sailo 2004: 119). Cane was the main item of exports during 1892-1895. In 1892-93, the exports value was Rs. 4290 and increased to Rs. 10043 during 1894-95. While the exports value of Timber and Firewood had declined from Rs. 13841 in 1892-93 to Rs. 8200 in 1894-95.

Table 5: Exports from Mizoram during 1892-1895

| Particles | 1892-93 | 1893-94 | 1894-95 |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Quantity | Quantity | Quantity |
| | Mds | Mds | Mds |
| Cane | 3632 | 5051 | 8012 |
| Bamboos | - | - | - |
| Rubber | 5 | 34 | 109 |
| Wax | 17 | 15 | 25 |
| Timber and Firewood | - | - | - |
| Miscellaneous | - | - | - |

Source: B. Lalhangliana, History and Culture of Mizo in India, Burma & Bangladesh (Mizoram: The Rtm Press, 2001), 530

Figure 9: Exports from Mizoram during 1892-1895



Source: Table 5

Table 6: Export Value in Mizoram during 1892-1895

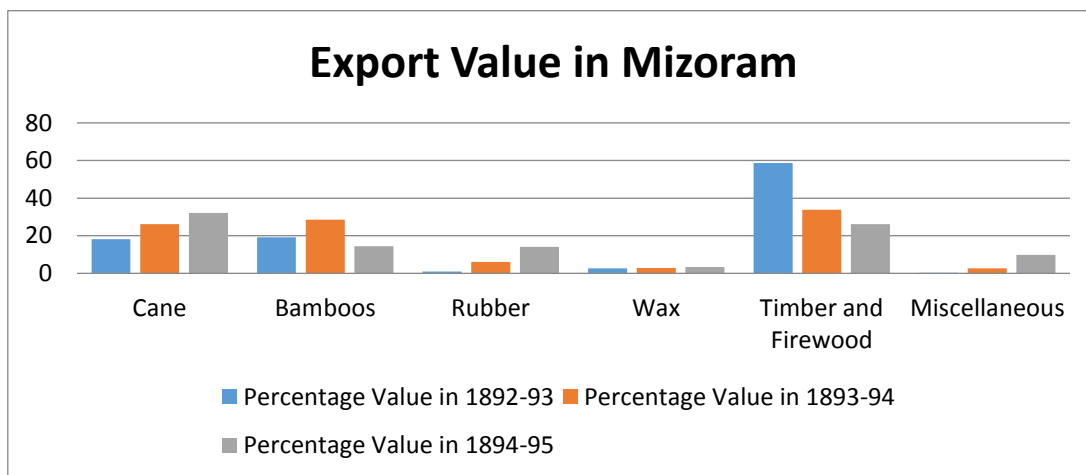
| Particles | Percentage Value in 1892-93 | Percentage Value in 1893-94 | Percentage Value in 1894-95 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cane | 18.20 | 26.09 | 32.09 |
| Bamboos | 19.11 | 28.56 | 14.38 |
| Rubber | 0.92 | 6.10 | 14.07 |
| Wax | 2.66 | 2.76 | 3.40 |
| Timber and Firewood | 58.74 | 33.86 | 26.20 |
| Miscellaneous | 0.35 | 2.60 | 9.82 |

Source: Calculated From B. Lalhangliana, History And Culture Of Mizo In India, Burma & Bangladesh (Mizoram: The Rtm Press, 2001), 529.

It is evident from the table that although the quantity export of Cane contributes the highest share, timber and firewood exports value was largest during 1892-93 and 1893-94 but decline

to 26.20% in the year 1894-95. During 1894-95, the percentage value of Cane had the highest share among the commodities exported i.e., 32.09%.

Figure 10: Export Value in Mizoram during 1892-1895



Source: Table 6

During the pre-colonial period, the Mizos had weak economic foundations and adopted a barter system of exchange. Agriculture became the mainstay of their economy and obtained their necessities by jhumming and other ancillary activities like hunting, fishing, and domesticating animals for their sustenance. It is evident that the Mizo people practised cottage industries which include basket works, pottery, iron work, cotton weaving, etc., (Mate 2014: 23-25). Their standard of living was low and often indulged in inter-tribal wars and raids. The British to maintain peace and harmony in the Lushai Hills delimit a definite boundary for every Chief and impose harsh penalty for those chiefs who enter and invade other chief's territory.

During the colonial period, Agriculture remained the backbone of the Mizo society. With the creation of trade marts in the bordering areas, there existed a proper communication between the Mizos and the neighbouring traders and these accelerated trade and commerce in the Mizo economy. With this, the transport system was also augmented and speeded up the commercialisation and monetization among the Mizo society (Mate 2014: 26-29). The British Government insisted payment of House tax in kind and demanded on cash payment in 1904 which compelled the Mizos to undertake wage labourers called Impressed Labour or free labour was demanded from each household per year. The first report rent on land leased was acknowledged in the year 1902-1903. The Mizo people started to acknowledge the value of money once the British forced them to pay the house tax in cash and this led to the introduction of monetized economy in Mizoram.

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